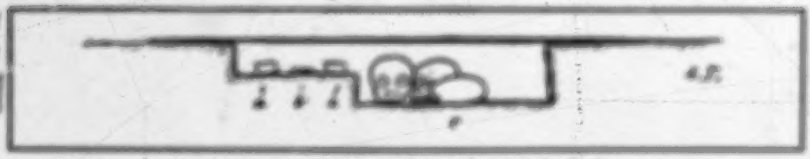

Fig. 53. Underground Chamber of a Mekuk Sorcerer, Cross-section.
(a) Circle made of plantain pieces, (b) magic medicines, (c) skulls of murdered relatives.

the Mekuk man's house companions in their sleep, so that they wake up the next day completely beaten up. They are also supposed to steal money and goods in order to take them to the Mekuk man. In short, the Mekuk stories remind one of the experiences of the man who wanted to learn to be afraid /Ed., in one of Grimm's fairy tales/.

Other medicines for wealth that utilize the power of the souls are more innocent; they do not require the murder of relatives nor care of the skulls. Instead, their powers are derived from the habitation of the souls, the Copaifera tessmannii Harms (ayong). The Mekuk skulls must be included only in the event the medicine man already possesses some. The procedure as a rule is as follows. The father of the person concerned goes with a medicine man, /150/ and both clear an area under a large Copaifera. Then a leaf vessel filled with water is set up, and into this some of the bark of the Copaifera is scraped nine times (three times three); furthermore a stone from the stomach of the crocodile is placed in it if one is available. A peculiar test of the worthiness of the young man is now given. Various objects are placed together in three piles: on the first are placed steamed cassava (women's food) and a basket (ebi'ak) carried only by old women because it has a small capacity; on the second, a rifle, a bundle of vegetables (ngun) with fish, brass ornaments, cowrie shells, and a piece of cloth, all of which are things that delight young people; on the third pile is placed a fly swatter (implement of the chiefs), a foot ring made of ivory, and a boiled chicken, in other words, such things as are allotted to chiefs. Now the young man is brought to the piles. "If he has sense," he will go to the last pile and consume the chicken. In this